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ABSTRACT

A critical examination of the colonial education of American Indians unearths the roots of many stereotypical beliefs about the culture and capabilities of Native Americans. Deep-seated ideas and practices that were accepted as natural by past colonizers continue to undergird contemporary stereotypes about American Indians. The tenets of colonial education were not based on natural truths but were culturally constructed to serve specific agendas of the colonizing nations. These tenets were that Native Americans were savages and had to be civilized; that civilization required Christian conversion; that civilization required subordination of Native communities, frequently through resettlement; and that Native peoples had mental, moral, physical, or cultural deficiencies that made certain pedagogical methods necessary for their education. Each of these tenets is analyzed along with its legacies in today's classrooms and communities. Particular attention is given to the repeated relocations of Native communities, children, workers, and families under the political control and legal jurisdiction of the colonizing nations, and to the special pedagogical methods used to overcome Native peoples' "deficits." Contains 94 references and notes. (SV)

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CHAPTER 1

# The Unnatural History of American Indian Education

K. TSIANINA LOMAWAIMA[1]

A critical examination of the colonial education of American Indians unearths the roots of many stereotypical beliefs about the culture and capability of Native Americans. The phrase *colonial education* refers to the reculturing and reeducation of American Indians by the secular and religious institutions of colonizing nations—Spain, Great Britain, France, and the United States of America. Deep-seated ideas and practices that were accepted as *natural* by past colonizers continue to undergird contemporary stereotypes about American Indians.

In truth, there was nothing natural *or true* about the tenets of colonial education: (1) that Native Americans were savages and had to be civilized; (2) that civilization required Christian conversion; (3) that civilization required subordination of Native communities, frequently achieved through resettlement efforts; and (4) that Native people had mental, moral, physical, or cultural deficiencies that made certain pedagogical methods necessary for their education. These tenets were not based on natural truths but were culturally constructed and served specific agendas of the colonizing nations, hence the title for this chapter. Although these ideas have become

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*naturalized*, or taken for granted over time, they should be questioned and analyzed.

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines *natural history* as "the study of natural objects and organisms, their origins, evolution, interrelationships, and description." *Natural* objects and organisms are those that are "produced by nature, not artificial or man-made." The study of American Indians has often been subsumed under the topic of "natural history." Our peoples and cultures have been presented in static dioramas in natural history museums as though we were nonhuman subjects, undeserving of inclusion within museums devoted to "American" (i.e., non-Native) history, culture, and civilization. The racist implications of the "unnatural history" of Indians extend beyond our exclusion from human history. We should also think carefully about uses of the word *natural* that imply *normal*, *true*, or *commonsense*. As human beings, we take for granted much of what we think, experience, and remember. Over time, certain ideas and perceptions of the world are taken as *natural*—in other words, not as artificial or man-made but as unexceptional components of the natural order of things. Over the years, certain invented and stereotypic ideas about American Indians have been accepted, by both Indians and non-Indians, as self-evident, *natural truths*. Many untrue ideas have been aggressively promulgated by European and American authorities.

The invention and dissemination of distortions or inaccuracies occurred because they proved useful in advancing various goals of colonizing nations. For example, for centuries, non-Indian historians and observers of American Indian life underestimated the devastating impact of infectious disease on American Indian populations.[2] European Americans viewed the New World as a sparsely populated virgin wilderness, thinly settled by roaming nomadic groups. This suited the notion that it was European American manifest destiny to "settle" this continent: If few Native people lived here, colonial intrusion could be described as settlement rather than conquest. Acknowledging that much of North America was well populated by Indian communities with advanced agricultural sciences and sophisticated technologies would have made European American notions of settlement much more difficult to justify.[3] Hence, images of "the virgin wilderness" and "roaming nomads" became accepted over time as *natural* truths.

The four tenets of colonial education mentioned earlier represent other untruths that have dominated educational institutions in North America since long before the United States government was established. This chapter discusses in particular detail the third and fourth tenets: the resettlement of Native people and the development of "special" pedagogies for Native people. That I focus on these concepts and leave other things out of this natural history calls for some explanation.

The term *American Indian education* has been used to refer to two distinctly different, segregated, and often opposing worlds: (1) the education of American Indian children by their parents, extended families, and communities, and (2) the education of American Indian children, teenagers, adults, and communities by colonial authorities, particularly European American institutions. This chapter focuses on the second world, the education of Indian people by the colonial powers of Spain, Great Britain, France, and the United States. I do not survey the educational theories, practices, and institutions American Indian communities and parents have developed over the centuries to educate their own children. My reasons are practical, ideological, and historical.

On the practical side, it is impossible to survey adequately both worlds of Indian education—the education of Indians *by Indians* and the education of Indians by *others*—in one chapter. Native America is remarkably diverse, encompassing hundreds of communities with distinct languages, cultures, philosophies, and educational systems that defy easy generalizations. Ideologically, I resist generalizations about American Indians because so many stereotypes rest on the mistaken assumption that all Indians are alike. Whether lazy or noble, drunken or stoic, poverty-stricken or living in harmony with nature, we are all lumped together in an artificial category that is anything but natural.

Historically, the goals of the colonial education of American Indians have been to transform Indian people and societies and to eradicate Indian self-government, self-determination, and self-education. In the late twentieth century, long after the U.S. independence from Great Britain, Indian education often still means the education of Indians by non-Indians. Many current attitudes, programs, practices, and beliefs continue the legacy of Indian education by *others*; these are contemporary expressions of colonial education.

While this chapter focuses on how non-Indians have imposed education on Indians, it is important to recognize that, in varying degrees, Indian self-education has survived under tremendous duress. Recently windows of opportunity have been opened more widely in the United States, making it possible for Indian communities to reassert and regain powers of self-governance, self-determination, and self-education, the three fundamental components of tribal sovereignty. The other chapters in this book attest to this truth.[4]

In the earliest interactions, Europeans constructed a model of appropriate education for Indians. This model included ideas and practices or, in other words, theory and methods. Educators, then as now, were concerned with these questions: What is the purpose of education? Who has authority to teach? Who are the students? Where should this education take place? What teaching methods are most suitable? What should the curriculum cover? What are students being prepared for? In addressing these questions, colonizing nations developed educational theory and methods particular to the colonial education of Indigenous populations, and to imported populations such as Africans brought to the Americas as slaves.

In surveying the educational theory and methods developed for American Indian communities by Spain, Great Britain, France, and the United States, I identified four common tenets of Indian education shared by the colonizing nations. I propose that these tenets have assumed a status as *natural* requirements, what *must* be achieved in order to educate Native Americans.

Until recently, official colonial education policy conflated the first two tenets. Civilization and Christian conversion were assumed for centuries to be the same thing.[5] Full status in one category required full status in the other. The separation of church and state, a foundation of our public school system, was not initiated in federal Indian boarding schools until the 1930s.[6]

Accordingly, I consider the first two tenets, *civilization* and *conversion*, side by side. I then elaborate on the third and fourth tenets—new model communities and appropriate pedagogical methods—in considerable detail because these factors are generally less well understood. Finally, I suggest ways the legacies of colonial education have been carried into today's classrooms and communities.

## Tenets 1 and 2: American Indians Need to be Civilized; Civilization Requires Christian Conversion.

Samuel Chapman Armstrong wrote, "Only the light of Christian truth and example, steadily shining, can lift men up." European notions of "savagery" and "civilization" were imported to the New World; they structured the very first European interactions with, and perceptions of, Native America. Deep-seated European fears of the unknown, the "wild," the forest, and "barbarians" who lived in the wilderness can be traced back to Greek philosophy. Those fears permeated Europe in the centuries before Columbus stumbled onto America; we see their influence in the Spanish expulsion of Moors and Jews, in the British conquest of Ireland, and elsewhere.[7]

Of course, a fourteenth-century Spanish Catholic priest carrying out the orders of the Inquisition believed he was carrying out the orders of God. The *natural order of things* demanded that heresy, whether Judaism or Islam, be eradicated. It is unlikely that such a priest ever considered the possibility that the supremacy of Christianity might be an artificial or man-made idea. He accepted it as a *natural* truth. In this unquestioning way, the *natural* dominion of the Christian God was carried to the Americas.

As recently as the 1940s, the historian Sister Mary Stanislaus Van Well wrote that Catholic missionaries in the Southwest *had* to control every aspect of Indian education because "nothing contrary to Christian religious teaching and morality can be tolerated by the Church. Hence the Church has the right to supervise all phases of the education of those who belong to her fold." Similarly, when the French returned to Quebec after their brief displacement (1629-1632) by the English, Father Paul LeJeune led the Jesuit Order in what one historian has termed "an all-out offensive" against Native religions. LeJeune's Jesuits naively expected they would achieve their proselytizing mission within one generation; they were to be disappointed. The French were secure, nonetheless, in their conviction that "by the process of evangelization and assimilation, the Amerindian would become *humanisé* as well as *francisé*," meaning they would become human as they became French.[8] Other colonizing nations shared the assumption that Christianity and European cultural traditions were the cornerstones of a "civilized" and "human" life.

### Tenet 3: Civilization Requires Subordination of Native Communities, Which May Be Achieved by Resettlement of Native People.

Everywhere in the colonial world, the tenets of civility and conversion were explicitly linked to power.[9] One tried-and-true method used by all colonial nations to assert power has been the relocation and resettlement of Indigenous communities. Spanish *reducciones* and *encomiendas*; French *reductions*; British praying towns; and American boarding schools, reservations, colonies, and homesteads are all examples of the colonial compulsion to radically restructure and control American Indian communities. In 1603, the secular political leader in Acadia was instructed in his duty:

> To seek to lead the [Native] nations thereof to the profession of the Christian faith, to civility of manners, an ordered life . . . and finally their recognition of and submission to the authority and domination of the Crown of France.[10]

Submission to authority and domination of colonial power were at the crux of the colonial encounter between American Indians and European Americans. Control is the key word here; the creation of these new communities was all about imposing military, political, economic, and social power. Spain, Great Britain, France, and the United States were each intent on the conquest of a continent, and the extension of power over Native nations was couched in the rhetoric of civilization versus savagery.

According to the colonizers, civilized communities were clustered around an urban center. The scale varied from hamlet to city, but social groups were congregated, bounded, and tied to the soil indirectly through service to a landlord (as in the case of feudalism) or directly through patented ownership (as in the case of slavery). *Savage* communities, on the other hand, were said to comprise nomadic roamers rather than landowners, possibly undeserving of the term *community* at all. This rhetorical context made it necessary to stereotype all American Indians as nomadic wanderers, thinly scattered across (but not really owners of) the landscape, despite abundant evidence to the contrary. When faced with the reality of settled Indian village life, colonizers frequently—although not universally—turned to practices of *re*settlement to impose political, civil, and religious jurisdiction.

One early exception to resettlement occurred on the northern frontiers of New Spain[11] in the Pueblo communities of modern-day Arizona and New Mexico. In this early era of European colonization, from the arrival of Juan de Oñate's expedition to New Mexico in 1598 to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, resettlement of sedentary Native communities was not a primary goal, but the assertion of colonial control was essential. The substantial Pueblo villages were not relocated, but Spanish institutions of religious and political control were superimposed. Catholic churches were built on the foundations of Pueblo ceremonial buildings, called *kivas*, and Spanish political offices were delegated to Pueblo men.[12] After nearly a century of often brutal Spanish rule, in 1680, the Pueblos and other Native people of the area united to push the Spanish back to El Paso, Texas. Twelve years later, the Spanish reasserted their jurisdiction but worked out a less punitive accommodation with Pueblo groups. By comparison in the late 1700s, the Spanish launched their conquest of Alta California (which included territories within southern and central modern-day California) and implemented a more aggressive resettlement and education program.

The *encomienda*—a feudal arrangement allowing little freedom to subjugated Indian residents—was the prevalent institution for resettling and reorganizing Native people in Old Mexico. In Alta California, however, the *mission*—flanked by the military force of the presidio (a garrison of soldiers) and the civic model of the pueblo or farm community—became the preeminent colonizing institution. Van Well, Catholic historian of the church's educational role in the American Southwest, described the mission as "a community or village *into which the missionaries gathered their converts* [emphasis added] or prospective converts . . . trained [them] in the rudiments of civilized living . . . taught Christian doctrine . . . at times even introduced [the Indians] to elements of reading [and] writing." Robert Jackson and native Californian scholar Edward Castillo label the missions' goals as acculturation and the production of a disciplined Indian labor force to serve the Spanish. These goals were achieved by gathering Native people under the control of Spanish priests, backed by the military power of the presidios. The Spanish had first allowed Native Californian families to live in traditional dwellings within the missions but eventually replaced these structures with "permanent adobe housing units . . . [that] afforded a greater degree of control

over the converts, which was enhanced by the building of walls to surround the villages."[13] As a result, Native Californians were housed in overcrowded, unsanitary barracks that separated men from women, parents from children, and "wild" from "mission" Indians. Mission architecture reinforced colonial control.

Spanish and French church doctrine dictated reducing "wild" Indians from states of unfettered and chaotic freedom to settled, organized, and civilized lives. This explains the terminology applied to resettled communities: *reducciones* in New Spain and *reductions* in New France. *Reductions* had first been established under French colonial direction in Central and South America. They were adopted in New France as well as a way to implement one cornerstone of LeJeune's plan to civilize the Natives in present-day Canada. His plan had four parts: (1) learn the Native language,[14] (2) establish educational seminaries for children, (3) build hospitals, and (4) encourage Native people to live sedentary lives. The Jesuits founded the settlement of Sillery in 1637, but warfare and disease erased it within two decades. The Jesuits learned from the Sillery experiment that too-close proximity to European settlements was not healthy (because of the transmission of epidemic diseases), so in 1667, they established the segregated community of Prairie de la Magdelaine (also known as Kentaké).

*Reductions* were important symbols of the educational ideology of the French, but in reality, they were never as numerous or as successful as the colonial powers might have wished. The *reductions* were, however, effective foci for French power and authority: residents were closely supervised, egress was restricted, every weekday was regimented into periods of prayer, and every Sunday witnessed a constant round of services, processions, and instructions.

In New England, English Protestant groups such as the religiously and culturally aggressive Puritans and separatist Pilgrims did not expend as much effort on missionary endeavors as the Catholic nations, but a few individuals devoted themselves to the conversion of local Native communities. John Eliot, Massachusetts Bay Colony minister known as "Apostle to the Indians," was dedicated to resettling Native converts into *praying towns,* where they were isolated from Native religious beliefs and practices. To be eligible for religious instruction, the towns had to subject themselves to the government of Massachusetts, placing them under the authority of English

military officers. Eliot's proselytizing targeted Native communities already weakened by epidemic diseases and nearby dominating colonial settlements. Eliot was not alone. On Martha's Vineyard, Thomas Mayhew, Jr. and Thomas Mayhew, Sr. were remarkably successful in accomplishing what William Simmons characterizes as "deep and rapid voluntary change to colonial ideology." There was no thought given, however, to integrating English and Native congregations; the praying towns were conceived as "similar to those of the English, *subordinate* to them, and geographically separate."[15] Simmons concludes that "a shift in authority in favor of the English" was a necessary prerequisite to conversion itself.[16]

The praying towns were ultimately doomed. At their high point in 1674, some 15 towns housed approximately 1,100 people (perhaps 10 percent of the local Native population at the time), but the general hysteria and anti-Indian sentiments during King Philip's War (1675-1676) conspired against their perpetuation. During the war, Christian Indians in Boston were ordered into concentration camps on Deer Island "for their own protection," and they never successfully rebuilt their Christian community. Allegiance of Christian Indians was instrumental to the English victory, but after the war, English authorities ignored that loyalty. Only four of the praying towns were rebuilt, and all had disappeared by the early 1700s. Ironically, Eliot's plan, and the strategy of resettlement to create new religious and political allegiances, was fairly successful. Even after their shabby treatment by the English during and after King Philip's War, almost half of the converts remained faithful to Christianity.[17]

The seeming paradox of European Americans unable, or unwilling, to recognize civilization when they encountered it in the nucleated village life of New England Algonquians, Iroquoians in New France, or Southwestern Pueblos is no paradox at all if we push aside the curtain of rhetoric and focus on the issue of power. Iroquois longhouses, New England villages, Alta California communities, and Pueblo towns were self-governing entities whose existences were perceived as threatening to European American politics. To achieve civilized living, colonizers believed Native people had to be removed from Native community life and integrated into new communities under European American control. Sometimes, this created seeming contradictions within the civilization rhetoric. In 1805, for example, the Society of Friends of Pennsylvania and New Jersey reported

positively on their progress in civilizing the Seneca. The Friends enthusiastically reported that Indians had begun to site individual houses along river courses rather than following their former habit of "crowding together in villages."[18]

The reason Indian villages were considered bad while American villages were deemed good had to do with power over social life. Indians in tribal villages were perceived as shackled by the communal tribal bond, while those in disaggregated homesteads were seen as free individuals within the liberal American nation. The impetus to detribalize Indian individuals and integrate them into the lower economic strata of the U.S. economy—as self-supporting rural farming families or, in the case of individuals, as domestic servants, manual laborers, agricultural workers, or low-skilled tradesmen—was fueled by the desire to alienate tribal people from large communal land bases.

By the 1800s the movement to relocate and resettle Indian people had established reservations across the West, small rancherias in California, "model homes" and "homesteads" on boarding school grounds and reservation allotments, and model "colonies" in U.S. Indian Territory and Canada.[19] At Hampton Institute in the 1880s,[20] anthropologist Alice Fletcher instigated the "model family" or "model home" project, designed to link the domestic transformations achieved in boarding schools to Indian family life back home on reservations. Model homes were built at Hampton for several young Indian couples, mostly from the Omaha reservation. Inspired by Fletcher, the Women's National Indian Association (WNIA), a national reform group of non-Native women, established a Home Building and Loan Committee to assist boarding school graduates to achieve "American-style housing." From 1884 to 1888, WNIA helped build 30 to 40 homes, some at Hampton, some on the Omaha reserve, and some in Alaskan villages.[21]

In several experiments across the West, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) established demonstration communities, or colonies of young "progressive" Indians, usually recruited from among recent boarding school graduates. In the colonies—such as Seger Colony in Oklahoma or the "Progressive Colony" established by 1918 near Sacaton, Arizona (southeast of present-day Phoenix), on the Pima reservation—young adults carried out what they had practiced in the schools, where they had made model furniture and model clothes

and learned to care for baby doll "families." In the 1930s, using funds from the federal Subsistence Homesteads program, a small model community was built on the grounds of Chilocco Indian Agricultural School in Oklahoma. The plan was to build "just small, inexpensive homes" that graduates could buy on a 30-year plan, although the land would remain in government ownership. During the New Deal era, the BIA also established "rehabilitation communities" connected to adult education programs. Red Shirt Table on the Pine Ridge reservation and Grass Mountain on the Rosebud reservation were well-known rehabilitation communities.[22]

In 1830, a full century earlier, Canada had embarked on a similar experiment. Chippewas were "settled" at Coldwater and Lake Simcoe Narrows. A road was built between the two settlements, land was cleared for farming, and administrators hoped "White farmers and skilled workers" could be found to build homes for the Indians, who would work as farmers and carters. Chippewas and their White neighbors were equally unimpressed by the idea, and the experiment failed; Coldwater had been abandoned by 1837.[23]

"Model" communities created in Canada and the United States were primarily models of social surveillance and control. At several Canadian communities, the Tsimshian "model Victorian village" at Metlakatla (present-day Alaska), and in the Progressive Colony near Sacaton, Arizona, daily activities were rigidly scheduled, and the inhabitants were subject to cabin-to-cabin inspections.[24] Pedagogical methods of discipline, surveillance, time scheduling, and control were also implemented in missions, schools, and reservations. These methods were designed to produce economically independent workers so thoroughly saturated in the ideology of Indian inferiority they would willingly accept places in society that the larger society defined as appropriate to their needs and abilities.

### Tenet 4: Civilization Requires Special Pedagogical Practices to Overcome Presumed Deficiencies in Indian Children and Adults.

The Jesuits in New France had been directed to introduce manual labor into Indian education as early as 1665. Early southwestern U.S. and California missions were described by Van Well as huge, self-supporting agricultural and industrial schools. The Franciscan

fathers in the California missions classified their converts not by intelligence, character, or spirituality but by their ability to work.[25] Work, manual labor, vocational training—all refer to the essential perceived need to train Native Americans in hard labor.

Spanish missions served as early models for the American religious and federal boarding schools of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. American boarding schools, in turn, were the models adopted in Canada after the 1879 *Davin Report*, commissioned by the Canadian government. Basic training in agricultural and domestic arts was thought to be fundamental to the civilizing process, and most educational systems required more student labor in fields, laundries, and shops than intellectual application in the classroom. Students were immersed in a life of labor, but their training was carefully designed not to create laborers who would compete economically against the privileged classes. Canadian education policy in 1910 stipulated that residential school curricula should "fit the Indian for civilized life *in his own environment* [emphasis added]," which meant stressing simplicity and practicality. First Nations people in Saskatchewan responded the next year by requesting that the Superintendent of Indian Affairs provide for schools that gave "more emphasis to classwork, and less to farming."[26]

Boarding and residential schools elevated manual labor and hard work to a pedestal as effective civilizing practices; cleanliness and orderliness were equally privileged pedagogical instruments of cultural transformation. The discipline of orderliness imposed the utmost uniformity of appearance on Native students. Uniforms, mission- or government-issued clothing, and regulation haircuts were essential markers of the "remaking" process in action. In addition to transforming the outward appearance of students and their work habits, emotionally charged pedagogical instruments such as liturgical music, popular songs and lullabies, ceremonies, dramas, and pageants were utilized to help reshape emotional expression, emotional life, and affective connections to culture and society.

In 1529 Franciscans established the St. John Lateran school to educate Mestizo children in Mexico City. Students wore distinctive uniforms, helped with the necessary labor, were subjected to a discipline of silence, and were under constant supervision, even through the night as they slept in their dormitories. Similarly, the "patio schools" for Mexican girls enforced strict uniformity of dress. A

contemporary observer noted there did "not exist a difference among them, even as regards a ribbon."[27]

This emphasis on uniformity and regimented discipline lasted four and one-half centuries as educational institutions strove to reshape Native individuals and societies. All American mission and federal boarding schools, from their inception until World War II, utilized the disciplines of military regimentation and uniformity to train students in subservience and conformity. Students at Chilocco Indian Agricultural School, one of the large off-reservation boarding schools, rose at dawn to march in close order drill; clad in government-issue GI uniforms, they carried unloaded Enfield rifles and executed precise drill patterns in response to the orders of student officers. Girls at Chilocco were punished if they refused the GI shoes, which they derisively called "bullhides," and attempted to wear shoes sent from home—shoes with "nonregulation" laces or a patch of gray "color."[28]

Yet other parts of the process of colonial education focused on transforming emotional expression and connections to Native ceremonial and social life. Educators through the ages have recognized the strength and endurance of emotional bonds to cultural phenomena formed early in life and reinforced through ritual, pageantry, theater, song, music, and dance. Sixteenth-century Franciscan schools in Mexico introduced Catholic social activities, fiestas, religious dramas, and music to provide "an emotional overtone to many of the drab and more repetitious drill methods." The priests recognized that the festive pageants and tableaux of Catholicism psychologically engaged potential converts "through active sensation and emotional association with the new order."[29]

Catholic missionaries in New France relied on lurid pictures of heaven and hell as well as the highly developed material culture of Catholic piety: rosaries, medals, statues, colored beads offered as prizes for correct rote memorization, colored sticks used to tally sins, and the crosses, bells, and candles of the church. One fervent proselytizer at Onondaga "made up for the lack of a church bell by running through the village before service calling out 'Fire! Fire! Ever burning hellfire!'" Given the high rates of Native mortality due to infectious epidemic crowd diseases such as measles, smallpox, and influenza (sometimes introduced by the missionaries themselves), it is not surprising that death and the afterlife preoccupied

Native peoples as well as the priests. One can only imagine the response of Native communities to the threat "Fire! Fire! Ever burning hellfire!"[30]

One Canadian missionary thought the Natives tended to be "sad" by nature so he set spiritual songs to "various joyful tunes" to lift their spirits. Similarly, the fathers in Alta California often described "a melancholy attitude among many converts." The Natives' general depression in the face of forced labor, gender segregation, and high death rates (particularly among infants, women, and children) should not seem surprising to us, but it was remarked upon by European contemporaries. Ludovik Choris, illustrator on the Russian expedition to California (1815-1818) led by Otto von Kotzebue, wrote of the Costanoan and Coast Miwok neophytes he sketched at the San Francisco mission, "I have never seen one smile; I have never seen one look one in the eye."[31]

Father Jean Pierron labored in the mission fields among the Mohawk in New France. Pierron illustrated cards with the Christian mysteries and invented a game called "Point to Point," which illustrated human life from "the point of birth to the point of Eternity." Pierron endorsed the use of brightly colored, garish, even lurid visual aids such as "fear-inspiring images of the torments of hell and purgatory" because, in his words, "one must begin by touching their hearts, before he can convince their minds." More recently, alumni of the Blue Quills Residential School in Alberta, Canada, recalled that the pictorial catechism used in the 1930s vividly depicted two roads. One road led up to heaven and was traveled only by Whites; the lower road to hell was populated entirely by Indians.[32]

Hearts could be touched, however, without necessarily persuading minds to change. Sometimes Indian students interpreted or transformed festive occasions on their own terms. Jacqueline Gresko proposes that in Saskatchewan and British Columbia, the "brass bands, sports teams and school spirit" of the Catholic schools "laid the foundation for such present-day [Native] cultural institutions" as the powwow and War Dance Festival.[33]

In the praying towns of New England, potential converts to Puritan Christianity had to be accepted into a congregation according to established standards set by, but not necessarily practiced by, English congregations. Puritans eschewed emotionally expressive religious behavior; they viewed prophets of more "enthusiastic" Chris-

tian denominations as instruments of the devil. Native inhabitants of praying towns such as Natick, Massachusetts, however, were compelled to demonstrate all the symptoms of emotional breakdown to be judged authentic converts. Even by contemporary English descriptions, New England natives were "well known not to be much subject to tears," but John Eliot wrote that the continuous cycle of weeping and confessions at Natick gave him "greater hope of great heartbreakings." One could argue that Eliot's "great heartbreakings" were the overt physical signs of the inner psychological transformations achieved through brainwashing, cultural attack, and epidemic mortality. Natick's citizens went through more than a half-dozen tear-filled, public confessional traumas before the congregation was approved.[34]

In the federal boarding schools of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, federal staff stereotypically expected Indian students to display a certain stoicism, and educators bent their efforts toward instilling "appropriate" forms of emotional expression. The stoicism—in public at least—should perhaps come as no surprise. Children found themselves in difficult, often hostile circumstances, where their own language, religion, culture, behavior, and individualism were under constant, systematic attack. In that kind of setting, who would admit to uncertainty or weakness before the enemy? Personal narratives and autobiographical accounts of boarding school life are full of references, however, to tears shed in private, often in bed at night.[35] Even if the cause was "only" homesickness, emotions were better kept to oneself.

Federal educators turned to stereotypes of Indian emotional and physical "deficiencies" to explain student behavior and to justify federal reshaping of Indian emotional life and expression. In a 1900 newspaper interview, federal Superintendent of Indian Schools Estelle Reel said this about Indian children under her charge:

> [The Indian child's] face is without that complete development of nerve and muscle which gives character to expressive features; his face seems stolid because it is without free expression, and at the same time his mind remains measurably stolid because of the very absence of mechanism for its own expression.[36]

The stoic and silent Indian is an enduring stereotype worth con-

sidering in this analysis of what is *natural* and what is culturally constructed. It is undeniably true that linguistic and social rules governing language use, and the interplay between spoken language and silence, differ among Native languages and between Native languages and English. However, we should consider the role that colonial education may have played in creating a social reality that has fed the stereotype of silence and stoicism. As mentioned earlier, Mestizo students at the St. John Lateran school in the 1530s wore distinctive uniforms, helped with work to sustain the school, and were kept under surveillance night and day. They were also subject to a discipline of silence. Girls at the associated *patio* schools were taught good (Spanish) manners and domestic skills (such as sewing and needlework to decorate the church), clothed in uniform dresses, kept occupied at all times, and uplifted through "*silence* and prayer."[4]

Imposed silence is as much a part of nearly five centuries of colonial education as uniforms, manual labor, and relocation. Silence has been an integral part of the discipline, regimentation, and internal transformation demanded of Indian children by colonial educators. If we hope to understand contemporary classrooms and contemporary Indian learners, we *must* examine Native cultures and knowledge bases, including rules governing language use and silence use. We must also examine the historic legacies of colonial education that may have created or contributed to ideas of Indian "silence." This is only one example of a more complex consideration of colonial education and its legacy of assumptions, which today are accepted, without question, as natural.

## Conclusion

What are some of the *natural truths* specific to colonial education? This chapter examined four tenets common to colonial education over the centuries:

**1. Native Americans were savages who had to be civilized.** This meant providing instruction in all aspects of a European American lifestyle. The markers of a civilized life included learning a new language (Spanish, French, or English) and adopting domestic customs (such as dress, hairstyle, and family structure) and economic technologies (such as architecture, foods, agricultural methods, trades, crafts, and so on) of the colonial nation.

**2. Civilization required Christianization.** The specific denominations have varied from nation to nation and by region, but Catholics, Baptists, Moravians, Mennonites, Quakers, and Mormons were prominent in the vast proselytizing mission.

**3. Native communities should be politically and legally subordinate to the nation state, even if it means relocating them.** Examples include the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century resettlement of Native peoples in New England into Puritan praying towns; the colonial resettlement of Native nations of New France into *reductions* and of New Spain into missions or *reducciones*; the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century resettlement of Native Americans onto reservations and rancherias; the resettlement of Native children into mission, manual labor, residential, and boarding schools; and the relocation of Indian workers and families into cities in the 1950s and 1960s. All of these new settings for Native people have been under the direct political control and legal jurisdiction of the colonizing nations.

**4. Specific pedagogical methods were needed to overcome deficits in mental, moral, and physical characteristics.** These methods typically included a military model of mass regimentation, authoritarian discipline, strict gender segregation, an emphasis on manual labor, avoidance of higher academic or professional training, rote memorization, and drill in desired physical and emotional habits.

Because these tenets are so deeply rooted in European philosophy and practice, so widely shared by colonial nations, and so enduring over time, they have been accepted uncritically by generations as "natural facts."[38] The first two tenets concerning civilization and Christianization may sound obsolete—or, at least, politically incorrect. The modern reader may wonder why it is necessary to bother with these dusty old ideas in a volume dedicated to contemporary research and practice in Indian education. Rephrasing these ideas in more contemporary terms makes clear that such ideas are still with us: Instead of saying "Indians must be civilized," we might say "Native Americans have been victims of backwardness, isolation, and discrimination, and must be brought into the American mainstream." As American society becomes more secular, the dismissal of Native spirituality continues. Instead of saying "Indians must be-





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come Christians," substitute "Native Americans must be welcomed and integrated into an American way of life that makes decisions based on science, not superstition."

The third tenet needs no rephrasing at all to sound current: Native communities should be politically and legally subordinate to the larger nation state. In evaluating the currency of this tenet, listen to the antitreaty activists who believe treaties are not constitutional documents but mere historic relics conferring undeserved rights on a select few. They do not support tribal sovereignty, self-government, self-determination, or self-education. Listen also to the proponents of "English only" initiatives, who believe the survival of Indigenous languages (along with Spanish) poses a threat to the moral and cultural fabric of the United States. Listen to the Supreme Court, a body deeply threatened by the survival of Native religious beliefs and practices, as evidenced in recent decisions denying religious freedom protections.[39] It seems clear that much of America still believes American Indians *must* be subordinate peoples and polities.[40]

Lastly, the tenet calling for a special pedagogy for Indian learners has its contemporary guises as well. Do people believe that American Indian children (or the children of other ethnic groups) require special pedagogical methods to learn because those children possess peculiar traits or insufficiencies? Listen to recommendations of reformers responding to the pedagogical challenges posed by so-called *disadvantaged* populations: they require vocational education or manual training, they're visual or right-brain learners, they're not verbal, they're culturally deprived, they don't think abstractly, and the list goes on.[41]

The enduring tenacity of these four tenets prompted the analysis in this chapter; we should not underestimate the power these propositions still wield in shaping popular thought and influencing public policy about Native Americans.[42] There is a historic connection—a family tree—that leads from the first and second tenets to the third and fourth. The legacy of these notions is still with us today.

To recognize and resist the same old ideas in new forms, we need to describe the ideas, articulate their connections, and make clear how they have been implemented in different times and places. We need to map the similarities between old ideas and new so we can judge for ourselves whether the new are really new, or whether old

ideas are still being accepted as *natural* facts. The colonial education of American Indians continues today. The four tenets discussed here still permeate textbooks and readers in many public, private, and parochial schools.

While some classrooms are deeply implicated in the continuation of colonial education, in other places, many Native children now have access to community schools that integrate Native culture, language, and curriculum.[43] Pedagogical practices, curricula, and teachers have changed significantly in recent decades, but the insidious legacy of colonial education has not been vanquished yet. It stretches far beyond classrooms and schools. Stereotypes, falsehoods, and plain ignorance permeate television programming; movies; romance paperbacks and their provocative covers; sports teams and their mascots; advertising copy, images, and trademarks; country-and-western songs; and toys and dolls—all the flotsam and jetsam of American popular culture.

The stereotypes of Native America may seem inescapable, but they are not inevitable. As long as stereotypical ideas are accepted as *natural facts*, they will never be scrutinized, analyzed, or revised. They will continue to be dominating influences in the training of young minds, Native and non-Native alike. Native and non-Native educators have an opportunity and responsibility to scrutinize, analyze, and revise the natural truths and the pedagogical theory and practice they implement every day. Searching for the legacies of colonial education is one place to begin.

## Notes

1. K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Creek) is a faculty member of the University of Arizona American Indian Studies Program. She would like to thank her colleagues at the University of Arizona, Teresa McCarty, Jay Stauss, and David Wilkins; Tom Biolsi of Portland State; and the anonymous reviewers of this volume for their careful and critical readings of this essay. She also is indebted to Teresa McCarty for assistance with references to contemporary research on language, literacy, and curriculum.

2. Scholars currently agree Native American populations suffered mortality rates of 90-95 percent due to epidemic diseases introduced by European, African, and Asian populations. Scholars do not agree on pre-1492 Native population numbers: estimates range from 900,000 to 18 million. For detailed debates over population counts and the impact of diseases, see Dobyns, *Their Number Become Thinned*; McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*; Snipp,

*American Indians*; Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust*; and Verano and Ubelaker, *Disease and Demography*. For associated ecological changes, see Cronon, *Changes in the Land*.

3. Weatherford, *Indian Givers* details examples of how Native American technologies and concepts in agriculture, cuisine, government, architecture, etc. have impacted the world. See Blackburn and Anderson, *Before the Wilderness* for Native Californian strategies of land use and resource management that entailed extensive human manipulation of environments. See Nabhan, *Enduring Seeds* for advanced cultural technologies in the American Southwest.

4. The reassertion of sovereignty in self-education has been facilitated by congressional legislation: the *Economic Opportunity Act* of 1964 (Public Law 88-452), which established the Office of Economic Opportunity [OEO] and led to Head Start, Upward Bound, Job Corps, Volunteers in Service to America [VISTA], and Indian Community Action Programs such as the Rough Rock Demonstration School, Navajo Nation (1966); *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965 (ESEA) (Public Law 89-10); Title I, which amended the ESEA to include Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools; *Indian Education Act* of 1972 (Public Law 92-318, Title IV); 1975 *Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act* (Public Law 93-638); creation of the American Indian Policy Review Commission in 1975 (Public Law 93-580); and 1990 *Native American Languages Act* (Public Law 101-477, Title I). The reassertion of sovereignty has also been facilitated by presidential executive orders such as President, Memorandum, "Government-to-Government Relations with Tribal Governments." For a review of research on Indian education in the twentieth century, see Lomawaima, "Educating Native Americans."

5. Much of American education has been built on a foundation of religious worldview, particularly nineteenth-century Protestantism. See Cremin, *Traditions of American Education* for a description of the moral force of Protestantism at the turn of the twentieth century. (The author is indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this citation.) Of course, many contemporary Christians believe Christianity and civilization are still inextricably linked. Some sectors continue to assert that deeply rooted European American cultural values, such as the patriarchal family, are essential to Christianity and to sustaining the "family values" of a civilized nation.

For more on missionary education of Native American children, see Barr, "Pottawatomie Baptist Manual Labor Training School"; Neely, "Quaker Era of Cherokee Indian Education"; and Southwick, "Educating the Mind."

6. In the late 1920s and early 1930s federal schools went through a reform process initiated by a detailed report on the Office of Indian Affairs known as the Meriam Report, after Lewis Meriam, leader of the research team. Report published by the Institute for Government Research (see bibliography), which later became the Brookings Institution.

John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933 to 1945, instituted a radical change in federal Indian education policy. He supported the right of Native people to practice their own religions and instructed federal employees no longer to harass or prosecute Indians for their religious beliefs and practices. See Philip, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*.

7. Armstrong, *Indian Question*, 10. For excellent surveys of this philosophical and ideological genealogy, see Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*; Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*; Jennings, *Invasion of America*; Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization*; and Takaki, *A Different Mirror*.

For more specific details on western European notions of the wilderness and the savagery it harbored, see Bartra, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass* and Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*.

8. Van Well, *Educational Aspects of the Missions*, 1; Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, 251, 274.

9. New France included the lands controlled by France in North America before 1763. It commonly refers to France's holdings in southcentral Canada and parts of what is now the northeastern United States, east and south of the Great Lakes.

10. Jaenen, "Education for Francization," 46.

11. New Spain, from 1521-1821, included territory now in the southwestern United States, Florida, Texas, Mexico, Central America north of Panama, the West Indies, and the Philippines.

12. See Sando, *Pueblo Nations*.

13. Van Well, *Educational Aspects of the Missions*, 22; Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 82. See also Findlay, "Elusive Institution" and Castillo, *Native American Perspectives*.

14. The purpose of learning the Native language was to facilitate the conversion and assimilation process; everyone involved in the "civilization" project believed in the ultimate transition to the French language. As Samuel Champlain commented, "With the French language they [Native peoples] may also acquire a French heart and spirit," quoted in Jaenen, "Education for Francization," 46.

15. Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 252; Simmons, "Conversion from Indian to Puritan," 215, 214.

16. In May 1677 the Massachusetts General Court restricted all Indians within the colony's jurisdiction to four plantations: Natick, Punkapaug, Hassanimesit, and Wamesit. In 1681 the four were reduced to three; Indians found outside these "reservations" were sent to "the House of Corrections or Prison," quoted in Kawashima, *Puritan Justice and the Indian*, 29.

See Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies* for more details on English and federal colonial Indian education in New England. For information about the mission efforts of John Eliot, the Mayhews, and others, see Kawashima, *Puritan Justice and the Indian*; Simmons, "Conversion from Indian to Puritan"; Ronda, "'We Are Well as We Are'"; and Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*.

17. See Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions* for background on the praying towns.

18. Society of Friends of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, *A Sketch*, 10.

19. Some colonies were established more for public relations than for transforming Indians. In the early 1900s the well-publicized File Hills Colony



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in southern Saskatchewan was a showpiece for Canadian and international visitors; other Indians "were neither allowed to tour through or visit individually," quoted in Carter, "Demonstrating Success," 3.

20. Hampton Institute was founded in Virginia after the Civil War by General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, son of New England missionaries to Hawaii. The normal school was designed to educate freed African Americans as teachers for Black children in the South; Hampton was founded on a premise of racial hierarchy. Its students were inculcated with an ideology of White superiority and the "proper" place of the Black race as laborers in the Southern economy. Hampton also educated Indian children for a period in the late 1800s. For more on Hampton, see Hultgren and Molin, *To Lead and to Serve* and Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute*.

21. Mathes, *Helen Hunt Jackson*, 131.

22. The author is grateful to Thomas Biolsi for bringing these communities to her attention. For more information, see Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota* and Lomawaima, "Shacks, Huts, Coops and Wickiups."

23. Wilson, "'No Blanket to Be Worn in School'," 70.

24. Metlakatla, in British Columbia, was created in 1862 and strictly controlled by missionary William Duncan. In 1891 the U.S. Congress established the community of Metlakatla in southeastern Alaska for Tsimshian who had migrated from British Columbia, cited in Prucha, *Great Father*, 1129.

25. Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 13.

26. Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, *Indian Education in Canada*, 8-9.

27. Barth, "Franciscan Education," 82, 102.

28. The first federal off-reservation boarding school was established in 1879 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, under the command of Army officer Richard Henry Pratt. Chilocco, Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, and Genoa Indian School in Nebraska were established in 1884. By the turn of the century, some 25 schools had been constructed. A few, such as Chemawa in Salem, Oregon, and Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, remain open today as high schools. Haskell, now known as Haskell Indian Nations University, is the only federally run college for American Indians. For histories of boarding schools and analyses of the impacts on Indian lives and communities, see Adams, *Education for Extinction*; Child, *Boarding School Seasons*; Child and Lomawaima, "Boarding School Education"; Coleman, *American Indian Children at School*; Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal*; Hultgren and Molin, *To Lead and to Serve*; Hyer, *One House, One Voice, One Heart*; Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute*; Lomawaima, "Domesticity in the Federal Indian Schools"; Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light*; Lomawaima, "Educating Native Americans"; Lomawaima, "Estelle Reel"; Lomawaima, "Shacks, Huts, Coops and Wickiups"; and McBeth, *Ethnic Identity*.

29. Barth, "Franciscan Education," 192-194. See also Eggan, "Instruction and Affect."

30. Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 34, 50.





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31. Ibid., 62; Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 52, 68-69.

32. Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 51; Jaenen, "Education for Francization," 48. See also Persson, "Changing Experience."

33. Gresko, "Creating Little Dominions," 88-89.

34. Salisbury, "Red Puritans," 16.

35. See La Flesche, *Middle Five*; Johnston, *Indian School Days*; and Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light*.

36. Lomawaima, "Estelle Reel," 14.

37. Barth, "Franciscan Education," 82, 102. For discussions of how Native communities used silence and how communicative rules of Native language differ from English, see Philips, "Participant Structures"; Dumont, "Learning English"; and Basso, *Western Apache Language and Culture*.

38. Wilkins, *American Indian Sovereignty*, 1. Wilkins analyzes the acceptance of culturally based assumptions in the context of critical legal theory. He characterizes *natural* facts as "reification," or a "fallacy of misplaced concreteness."

39. See the decisions in *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*, 485 U.S. 439 (1988) and *Employment Division, Dept. of Human Resources v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990), which deny First Amendment religious freedom protection to American Indian religions.

40. See Williams and Neubrech, *Indian Treaties* for the antitreaty view; see Whaley and Bresette, *Walleye Warriors* for an analysis of the treaty rights controversy in Wisconsin. (The author is grateful to Dave Wilkins for bringing this reference to her attention). See also Baron, *English-Only Question*; Crawford, *Hold Your Tongue*; Daniels, *Not Only English*; Gallegos, *English—Our Official Language?*; and Piatt, *Only English?*

41. See Lomawaima, "Educating Native Americans."

42. A number of important histories of colonial education of Indians and federal Indian policy do not analyze events occurring after the 1930s or 1940s. Collectively, the literature suggests we are in a postcolonial period, but this chapter aims to question that assumption. Books that stop at or near the 1930s include Adams, *Education for Extinction*; Child, *Boarding School Seasons*; Coleman, *American Indian Children at School*; Hoxie, *A Final Promise*; and Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light*. Exceptions include DeJong, *Promises of the Past* and Szasz, *Education and the American Indian*.

43. See Dupuis and Walker, "Circle of Learning at Kickapoo"; Fiordo, "Great Learning Enterprise"; Hornberger, *Indigenous Literacies in the Americas*; Lipka and Stairs, "Negotiating the Culture of Indigenous Schools"; McCarty, "School as Community"; Palmer, "Language and Culture Approach"; Rosier and Holm, *Rock Point Experience*; Watahomigie and McCarty, "Language in Literacy"; McCarty and Zepeda, "Indigenous Language Education and Literacy"; and Stokes, "Curriculum for Native American Students."



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